

Appl. No. 10/078,350
Amendment dated April 4, 2007
Reply to Office Action of January 4, 2007

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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-2. (Canceled).

3. (Currently Amended) ~~A storage operational system according to Claim 1,~~
for administrating computers and storage devices connected to the computers
comprising:

a means for getting information on current status of storage usage of said
storage devices;

a means for getting users' set-up requirements for said storage devices;

a means for creating proposed set-ups for storage spaces on said storage
devices based on said set-up requirements by the users and said information on
current status of storage usage of said storage devices;

a means for setting prices to be charged to the users for said created
proposed set-ups of said storage spaces on said storage devices;

a means for the users to select any of said created, proposed set-ups of said
storage spaces on said storage devices;

a means for setting said storage spaces on said storage devices depending
on the selection; and

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a means for presenting next-best proposed set-ups for partially satisfying users' requirements for storage devices set-ups even if all of said users' requirements are not satisfied.

wherein said storage operational system comprises:

a means for negotiating with other users, which already have assigned storage devices, about conditions for using the storage devices to change set-ups for said storage devices assigned to said other users;

a means for changing said set-ups of said storage devices assigned to said other users based on the result from of the negotiation; and

a means for applying discount prices for usages of said storage devices of said other users when they are rented to other-users issuing set-up requirements.

4-7. (Canceled).

8. (Currently Amended) A method for providing the storage rental services according to Claim 6, for the storage operational system, which administers the computers and the storage devices connected to the computers, comprising the steps of:

getting information on said current status of storage usage of said storage devices;

getting the users' set-up requirements for said storage devices;

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creating proposed set-ups for storage spaces on said storage devices based on said set-up requirements by the users and said information on current status of storage usage of said storage devices for presenting to the users;

setting prices to be charged to the users for the said created proposed set-ups of said storage spaces on said storage devices;

making the users select any of said created, proposed set-ups of said storage spaces on said storage devices; and

setting said storage spaces on said storage devices depending on the selection.

wherein next-best proposed set-ups partially satisfying said users' requirements for set-ups are created by following said procedure for creating proposed set-ups if all of said requirements cannot be satisfied, and are presented to the users, and

wherein said method comprises the ~~steps~~procedures of:

negotiating with other users, which already have assigned storage devices, about modification to the use conditions for storage devices assigned to them to change the set-ups for said storage devices assigned to such other~~the~~ existing users;

changing the set-ups for storage devices assigned to the other users depending on the result of the~~from~~ negotiation; and

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applying discount prices for the usages of said storage devices by the other
users issuing set-up requirements based on the change ~~modification~~ to the set-ups of
the other users.

9. (Canceled).